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4. NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE CONCLUDES IN DISARRAY--BUT TREATY REMAINS INTACT

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference ended a four-week meeting in Geneva in discord and disharmony. Uncompromising non-aligned proposals on arms control issues prevented adoption of a final declaration supporting the NPT. This was contrary to the previous review conference in 1975 when a declaration was agreed. While the failure to achieve a consensus on a final declaration is primarily of symbolic significance--the NPT itself has emerged from the review exercise without alteration or loss of adherents--the North-South discord on arms control issues is likely to carry over into subsequent forums such as the UNGA and to complicate US efforts to widen the NPT's appeal.

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Some non-aligned nations, led by several hard-liners--Yugoslavia, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Mexico and the Philippines--took uncompromising positions on several arms control issues. These proposals were patently unacceptable to the nuclear weapons states and were intended to prevent agreement on a final declaration. The non-aligned demands included: (1) a moratorium on all nuclear testing, (2) creation of a CTB working group to monitor Comprehensive Test Ban negotiations, (3) agreement by the US and the Soviet Union to observe the terms of the SALT II treaty pending ratification, and (4) the condemnation of Israel and South Africa as obstacles to the creation of nuclear-weapons-free zones in their regions. They also called for the cessation of all nuclear cooperation with Israel and South Africa unless they accept IAEA safeguards on all their nuclear facilities.

The non-aligned hardliners probably believed that the lack of consensus and final declaration would dramatize the lack of progress on arms control by the nuclear weapons states without directly weakening the Treaty itself. The hardliners may also have felt that the arms control issue provided the best possible vehicle for blocking a consensus document that would have advocated broadening the scope of curbs on nuclear exports.

The hardliners' disenchantment with certain aspects of the current implementation of the NPT directly reflected views of important non-NPT signatory states that have resisted adherence to the Treaty. Indeed, some of these non-signatories were present at the conference as observers and several of them--notably Brazil, Argentina, India and Cuba--reportedly played a significant background role in strengthening non-aligned resolve to resist compromise on the arms control issue.

State Dept. review completed

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